

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1) (ONCE AMENDED) A system for distributing image data comprising:  
at least one frame device configured to operate according to preferences defined by a user, said at least one frame device comprising a border region modeled to resemble a picture frame designed to circumscribe printed photographs;  
a user interface coupled to at least one server system via a network wherein said user interface is physically separable from said at least one frame device and configured to obtain image data and said preferences from said user and provide said image data and said preferences to said at least one server system;  
said at least one server system coupled to said at least one frame device via said network, wherein said at least one server system is configured to periodically relay said image data and said preferences to said at least one frame device when said at least one frame device automatically issues a request for said image data/.
- 2) (PLEASE CANCEL WITHOUT PREJUDICE)
- 3) (ONCE AMENDED) The system of claim 1 wherein said at least one frame device stores said preferences at said at least one frame device in at least one behavior module.
- 4) (PLEASE CANCEL WITHOUT PREJUDICE)
- 5) (ONCE AMENDED) The system of claim 3 wherein said preferences are also stored in said at least one server system.
- 6) (ONCE AMENDED) The system of claim 3 wherein said at least one frame device periodically obtains an update for said at least one behavior module by

obtaining said preferences from said at least one server system.

6) 7) (ONCE AMENDED) The system of claim 1 wherein input to said user interface is permitted when said user is authenticated by said at least one server system.

8) (PLEASE CANCEL WITHOUT PREJUDICE)

9) (ONCE AMENDED) The system of claim 1 wherein said at least one frame device initiates said request for said image data at intervals obtained via said user interface.

10) (ONCE AMENDED) The system of claim 3 wherein said at least one behavior module directs said at least one frame device to obtain said image data from a content provider.

11-22) (PLEASE CANCEL WITHOUT PREJUDICE)

23-33) (PLEASE CANCEL WITHOUT PREJUDICE)

34) (ONCE AMENDED) A method for distributing picture mail via a network to a community of frame devices comprising:

connecting at least one frame device to a network wherein said at least one frame device comprises a border region modeled to resemble a picture frame designed to circumscribe printed photographs;

obtaining a configuration number sequence from a memory located in said at least one frame device; using said configuration number sequence to initiate a connection to at least one data server via said network;

obtaining a localized number sequence from said at least one data server;

terminating said connection to said at least one data server;

reconnecting to said at least one data server via said network using said localized number sequence;

presenting a user interface to a user associated with said at least one frame device, wherein said presenting executes at a location physically separable from said at least one frame device;

obtaining image data from said user via said user interface;

providing said image data to said at least one frame device via said network;

storing said image data in said memory of said at least one frame device.

35) (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 34 wherein said localized number sequence is stored in said memory of said at least one frame device.

36) (UNCHANGED) The method of claim 35 wherein said at least one frame device utilizes said localized number sequence when said localized number sequence resides in said memory.

37) (UNCHANGED) The method of claim 34 wherein said configuration number sequence is used when said localized number sequence does not reside in said memory.

38) (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 34 wherein said obtaining said image data from said user via said user interface further comprises storing said image data in at least one data repository accessible via said network.

39) (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 38 further comprising:

obtaining an update of said at least one frame device's onboard software from said at least one data repository via said network.

40) (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 39 wherein said update to said onboard software modifies said at least one frame devices functionality.

41) (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 40 wherein said at least one frame device determines whether said update to said onboard software is current.

42) (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 41 wherein said obtaining said update of said onboard software executes when said update to said onboard software is not current.

43) (UNCHANGED) The method of claim 34 wherein said step of obtaining said configuration number sequence from said memory located in said at least one frame device occurs automatically.

44) (NEW) A method for distributing digital photo data to at least one picture frame device comprising:

- connecting at least one picture frame device to a network coupled to at least one server system;
- presenting a user interface to a user associated with said at least one picture frame device, wherein said presenting executes at a client system coupled to said network and physically separated from said at least one picture frame devices;
- utilizing said user interface to obtain digital photo data from said user;
- populating said at least one server system with said digital photo data;
- determining if said digital photo data conforms to display constraints associated with said at least one picture frame device;
- modifying said digital photo data to conform to said display constraints when said determining step indicates non-conformity;
- said at least one picture frame device automatically initiating a periodic connection between said at least one picture frame device and said at least one server system via said network;

transmitting said digital photo data from said at least one server system to said at least one picture frame device via said network;  
displaying said digital photo data on said at least one picture frame device.

45) (NEW) The method of claim 44 wherein said at least one picture frame device comprises an ornamental border region that circumscribes said digital photo data.

46) NEW) The method of claim 44 wherein said at least one picture frame device comprises a unique identifier.

47) (NEW) The method of claim 46 wherein said digital photo data is associated with said unique identifier.

48) (NEW) The method of claim 44 wherein said display constraints further comprise filter criteria.

49) (NEW) The method of claim 48 wherein said filter criteria comprises determining if said user has permission to access said at least one server system.

50) (NEW) The method of claim 44 wherein said at least one picture frame device comprises a behavior module configured to store operational preferences associated with said at least one picture frame device.

51) (NEW) The method of claim 50 further comprising:  
said user interface further comprising a means for obtaining said operational preferences;  
loading said operational preferences into said behavior module at said at least one picture frame device via said network.

52) (NEW) The method of claim 51 where said presenting said user interface occurs after said user is authenticated.

53) (NEW) The method of claim 52 wherein said operational preferences comprise behavior characteristics stored in said at least one server system prior to performing said loading said operational preferences into said behavior module.

54) (NEW) The method of claim 51 wherein behavior module directs said at least one picture frame device to perform said step of automatically initiating, from said at least one picture frame device, said periodic connection between said at least one picture frame device and said at least one server system at predetermined intervals.

55) (NEW) The method of claim 54 wherein said predetermined intervals are set via said user interface.

56) (NEW) A system for distributing digital photo data between a plurality of users comprising:

at least one frame device configured to operate according to a set of preferences defined by a first user wherein said at least one frame device comprises a border region modeled to resemble a picture frame designed to circumscribe printed photographs;

a network coupled to said at least one frame device wherein said at least one frame device is further configured to:

obtain a configuration number sequence from a memory located in said at least one frame device;

use said configuration number sequence to initiate a connection to at least one server system via said network;

obtain a localized number sequence from said at least one server system;

terminate said connection to said at least one server system;

reconnect to said at least one server system via said network using said localized number sequence;

a user interface transmitted to at least one client system by said at least one server system via said network wherein said user interface and said at least one client system are physically separated from said at least one frame device and provide a means for obtaining said digital photo data from a second user of said at least one client system and transmitting said digital photo to said at least one server system;

said at least one server system coupled to said at least one frame device via said network, wherein said at least one server system is configured to periodically relay said digital photo data to said at least one frame device when said at least one frame device automatically issues a request for said image data.

57) (NEW) The system of claim 56 wherein said digital photo data is stored in said memory of said at least one frame device.

58) (NEW) The system of claim 56 wherein said at least one server system is further configured to determine if said digital photo data conforms to display constraints associated with said at least one frame device and modify said digital photo data to conform to said display constraints when said determining digital photo data is non-conforming.

59) (NEW) The system of claim 58 wherein said display constraints comprise a size value associated with said digital photo data.

60) (NEW) The system of claim 58 wherein said display constraints comprise a resolution value associated with said digital photo data.

61) (NEW) The system of claim 58 wherein said constraints comprises a quality value associated with said digital photo data.

62) (NEW) A computer program product comprising:  
a computer usable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein for distributing data over a network to at least one frame device, said computer program product comprising computer readable program configured to:

- present a user interface to a first user associated with said at least one frame device, wherein said presenting executes at a geographic location physically separate from said at least one frame device;
- utilizing said user interface to obtain digital photo data from said first user;
- populate a data repository with said digital photo data;
- respond to a request for said digital photo data from said at least one frame device by transmitting over said network said digital photo data from said data repository to at least one frame device;
- display said digital photo data at said at least one frame device to a second user.

63) (NEW) The computer program product of claim 62 further comprising computer readable program code configured to determine if said first user has permission to populate said data repository.

64) (NEW) The computer program product of claim 62 wherein said at least one frame device comprises a unique identifier.

65) (NEW) The computer program product of claim 62 wherein said digital photo data is stored in said data repository in a manner associated with said unique identifier.

66) (NEW) The computer program product of claim 62 wherein said at least one frame device comprises computer readable program code configured to store behavior characteristics for controlling said at least one frame device's operations.

- 67) (NEW) The computer program product of claim 66 wherein said behavior characteristics are adjustable by said second user via said user interface.
- 68) (NEW) The computer program product of claim 66 further comprising computer readable program code configured to store said behavior characteristics in said data repository prior to transmitting said behavior characteristics to said at least one frame device over said network.
- 69) (NEW) The computer program product of claim 67 wherein access to said user interface occurs when said first user is authenticated.
- 70) (NEW) The computer program product of claim 67 wherein said at least one frame device requests image data over said network from said data repository at predetermined intervals.
- 71) (NEW) The computer program product of claim 70 wherein said predetermined intervals are set via said user interface.
- 72) (NEW) The computer program product of claim 71 wherein said first user comprises a content provider.